

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 SCCT-01 /068 W

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R 241642Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4053

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A DECON 12/31/75

TAGS: PFOR, PLO, UR

SUBJECT: 'ARAFAT TAKES STEP TOWARD MOSCOW

REF: BEIRUT 4450

1. 'ARAFAT, WHO HAS BEEN REPORTED BY PRESS TO
BE ON VERGE OF VISITING USSR FOR LAST SEVERAL
WEEKS, IS NOW SAID TO HAVE DECIDED TO MAKE VISIT
WITHIN NEXT SEVERAL DAYS. PALESTINIAN NEWS
AGENCY (WAFA) RELEASE OF APRIL 24 (FBIS JN240640)
MAKES IT OFFICIAL NOT ONLY THAT PALESTINIAN DELE-
GATION WILL VISIT SOVIET CAPITAL, BUT THAT
'ARAFAT WILL HEAD GROUP, THUS JOINING PARADE OF
ARAB LUMINARIES WHO HAVE RECENTLY MADE SOVIET
PILGRIMAGE. PRO-FEDAYEEN DAILY, AL MUHARRIR, OF
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APRIL 24 SPECULATES THAT DEL WILL LEAVE FOR MOSCOW

ON FRIDAY, APRIL 25 (FBIS JN141231).

2. WAFA ANNOUNCEMENT FOLLOWED MEETING EVENING
APRIL 23 BETWEEN 'ARAFAT AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR
TO LEBANON SOLDATOV. MEETING, SECOND BETWEEN
'ARAFAT AND SOLDATOV WITHIN SEVENTY-TWO HOURS,
WAS APPARENTLY OCCASIONED BY "IMPORTANT MESSAGE"
FROM SOVIET LEADERSHIP TO 'ARAFAT.

3. LOCAL RUMOR ALSO HAS IT THAT SESSION, IN-
VOLVING ABU IYAD (SALAH KHALAF) OF FATAH,
HAWATMEH AND ABD RABBU OF PDFLP, AND ABDUL MAJID
RAFI'I, LEBANESE DEPUTY FROM TRIPOLI WHO LEANS
TO PRO-IRAQI BAATHIST LINE, ALSO MET EVENING
APRIL 23 AT PLO POLITICAL BUREAU IN BEIRUT.
LOCAL SPECULATION IS THAT MEETING AIMED AT
COORDINATING EFFORTS OF PLO AND "REJECTIONISTS"
BUT WE FIND REPORTED LINE-UP, BOTH BY ITS INCLU*
SIONS AND OMISSIONS, INAPPROPRIATE FOR SUCH PUR-
POSE. IT IS MORE PLAUSIBLE, IN VIEW 'ARAFAT'S
APPARENTLY IMMINENT DEPARTURE FOR MOSCOW, THAT
THIS SESSION WAS HELD TO PUT PLO HOUSE IN ORDER,
PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS MARXIST PDFLP'S ROLE, BE-
FORE 'ARAFAT MEETS WITH SOVIETS. SUBSIDIARY OB-
JECTIVE COULD HAVE BEEN TO ASSURE, INSOFAR AS
POSSIBLE, THAT TENUOUS STAND-OFF BETWEEN PALESTINIANS/
LEBANESE LEFTISTS AND PHALANGISTS, IN WAKE OF LAST
WEEK'S CONFRONTATION, DOES NOT BREAK DOWN WHILE
'ARAFAT AND OTHER KEY PLO FIGURES ARE AWAY IN
MOSCOW. LATTER FACTOR COULD EXPLAIN CURIOUS
PRESENCE OF RAFI'I.

GODLEY

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